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SUBJECT: Media Reaction - Stockholm ICI Conference

I. On May 30, the independent liberal Stockholm morning daily "Dagens Nyheter" editorialized on "A More Open U.S.":

"Sweden received some American praise at the major Iraq conference in Stockholm, primarily for its refugee policy....

"But Sweden's efforts were not on the agenda.  
'The work is not finished, and the international community must assist Iraq on its way forward,' U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice pointed out....

"Her statement illustrates the fact that today there is an understanding in the Bush administration that did not exist five years ago. Then, 'the international community' was just an annoying detail that could be ignored....

"A superpower always has the option to take unilateral action in a way that other states do not. This is an option which any American President has, and which will be used if needed. However, the tone, the direction, and the willingness to cooperate likely will be different when a new President moves into the White House. And this would be a major step away from the world which George W. Bush felt he was leading."

II. On May 30, the conservative Stockholm morning daily "Svenska Dagbladet" lead editorial by foreign affairs editor Claes Arvidsson carried the headline "We Can Help but not Do the Job."

"As is customary at international conferences, there was much talk at the ICI conference...but no meeting between the U.S. and the Iranian foreign ministers. But sooner or later contacts must be moved up to that level. Regardless how much one would like to, it is not possible to disregard Iran....

"But, if nothing else, the ICI is a demonstration of the international engagement concerning Iraq, although it remains to be seen how much support will materialize, and it would not be at all wrong if the U.S. received more refugees.

"But when talking about lack of engagement, such can be found in the Arab states - Iraq's neighbors. It is about writing off debts but also about matters where the only cost is demonstrating political courage....

"Their half-hearted contacts and cooperation with Iraq...only is a reflection of their fear to be singled out as players on the U.S. team."  
WOOD